



Procedure: Breastfeeding Promotion and Support

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Purpose

To establish breastfeeding as the normal feeding method for infants. To encourage WIC participants to breastfeed their infants and to provide optimal support to breastfeeding women.

Breastfeeding promotion and support is provided to all pregnant and breastfeeding WIC participants.

Positive breastfeeding messages must be incorporated into all relevant educational activities, materials and outreach efforts where infant feeding is discussed.

All breastfeeding counseling and education is provided by competent staff and follows recommended breastfeeding education topics and timeline, tailoring the education to the individual participants needs.

Promotion to Pregnant Women

All pregnant WIC participants are encouraged to breastfeed unless contraindicated for health reasons (e.g. HIV positive, use of contraindicated drugs/medications, etc.).

Every pregnant participant will be provided breastfeeding education/counseling which:

- Integrates breastfeeding promotion into the continuum of prenatal care.
- Includes an assessment of participant's knowledge, concerns and attitudes related to breastfeeding at the earliest opportunity in the prenatal period and provides prenatal education based on this assessment.

Prenatal counseling/education should include helping the mother to communicate effectively with hospital staff, physician or health care providers about her decision to breastfeed.

Support for Breastfeeding Women

Every breastfeeding woman will be provided breastfeeding support which:

- Includes assessment of participant's knowledge and experiences as soon as possible after delivery.
- Counseling and education to promote exclusive breastfeeding until appropriate timing for addition of solid foods.
- Support for returning to work or school, including work environment and breast milk collection and storage.

Breastfeeding Peer Counseling

Breastfeeding Peer Counselors provide evidence-based, mother-to-mother support to encourage initiation and continuation of breastfeeding. Local agencies are encouraged to implement a BFPC program according to the standards provided in the Loving Support BFPC Model.